

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Catherine Bradley, and I am from Ridgefield. I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I appreciate that this chamber passed healthcare access for immigrant children ages 0-8 last year, but the reality is children's healthcare needs do not magically disappear at age 9. It is vital for children of all ages to have access to healthcare in order to track their growth and development, teach lifelong healthy habits, and detect any conditions or diseases as early as possible. Without insurance coverage, such services are unaffordable and inaccessible to many immigrant families, leading to poor childhood health outcomes that produce ripple effects later in life. I have seen both the importance and expense of childhood healthcare in my current job as a receptionist at a physical therapy office. At our office, children from ages 6-18 have received physical therapy for everything from broken bones to scoliosis to cerebral palsy. But without insurance, just six sessions cost a total of \$1,020. For these children, physical therapy is necessary to avoid increased pain and decreased mobility later in life. But for many immigrant children, that care is out of reach due to the prohibitive out-of-pocket costs.

Passing S.B. 284 would be a massive step in healthcare equity; however, it is still unjust to leave immigrant adults without healthcare as well. Healthy children need healthy parents to care for them, and it has been proven that children whose parents are insured are more likely to access and receive care. As an example, it will be wonderful when, under the provisions of this bill, an immigrant child can receive treatment for their broken wrist. However, the family will still face devastating physical and financial consequences if their parent suffers a similar injury, cannot receive the same treatment, and sees their ability to work and support the family affected. As this chamber prepares to vote on S.B. 284, I also ask you to consider how we can ensure healthcare access for immigrants of all ages in Connecticut and to create a long-term plan to make such coverage a reality.

Ultimately, my support for this bill stems from my belief that healthcare is a human right for all. To deny immigrants affordable healthcare because of their immigration status is discrimination and a deprivation of fundamental human rights.

In conclusion, I support S.B. 284, and I ask the committee to pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to develop a plan to ensure healthcare access for immigrants of all ages. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Catherine Bradley  
Ridgefield, CT